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# Discussion Report Talking ASEAN

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## Reflections on the 34th ASEAN Summit

Jakarta, July 4<sup>th</sup> 2019



## Introduction

On Thursday, 4 July 2019, The Habibie Center (THC) held its Talking ASEAN dialogue entitled “*Reflections on the 34th ASEAN Summit*” at The Habibie Center Building in Jakarta. This particular Talking ASEAN featured **H.E. Amb. Michael Tene** (Directorate-General of ASEAN Cooperation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia), **Ms. Yuyun Wahyuningrum** (Representative of Indonesia to the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights), and **Mr. Kornelius Purba** (Senior Managing Editor, The Jakarta Post), with A. Ibrahim Almuttaqi (Head, ASEAN Studies Program, The Habibie Center) moderating.

The objectives of this dialogue were to: (a) discuss the main outcomes of the 34th ASEAN Summit and related meetings; (b) discuss Thailand's achievements during their chairmanship this far; (c) identify the challenges posed to ASEAN at large in 2019; and (d) produce possible recommendations for Thailand on its ASEAN 2019 chairmanship.


Among the key recommendations that emerged from this particular Talking ASEAN public dialogue were: (1) to move forward with the recently declared ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific by encouraging partners in the region to work towards the implementation of the various areas of cooperation put forward in the outlook; (2) to protect the safety of displaced Rohingya refugees and guarantee their security in order that the repatriation process runs smoothly, primarily by examining/addressing the reasons why they fled in the first place; and (3) to utilize the current good situation where both ASEAN and China have expressed their intentions to finish the negotiation process of the Code of Conduct on the South China Sea within the next 2 years.

This discussion report summarizes the key points of each speaker, as well as the question and answer session that followed.

# PRESENTATION FROM THE PANELIST



**H. E. Amb. Michael Tene**  
(Directorate General of ASEAN  
Cooperation, Ministry of Foreign  
Affairs in Indonesia)



Having participated in the ASEAN Summit itself, Mr. Tene provided insight on the progress that the Summit made. He started by giving a summary of the topics discussed in the Summit, reminding the audience that the central theme for Thailand's chairmanship this year is 'Advancing Partnership for Sustainability'. Under this broad topic, the Summit discussed the importance of ensuring that ASEAN is always up to date with the current challenges, specifically regarding the 4th Industrial Revolution and the digital resolution. The Summit also brought up the importance of cybersecurity, cooperation and partnership between the member states and dialogue partners, and the sustainability of the ASEAN initiatives.




The Summit brought light upon many issues: the implications of the growing trade war between the United States and China, the importance of making progress on the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), ASEAN's outlook on the Indo-Pacific Concept, environmental issues such as marine debris, efforts to assist Myanmar in dealing with the repatriation of the Rakhine state, and the progress of the Code of Conduct regarding the South China Sea.

The outcomes of the Summit are as follows: Mr. Tene shared that substantial progress has been made with the RCEP, with ASEAN expecting to conclude the RCEP later this year. Regarding the Rohingya refugees, the ASEAN leaders have also sent a preliminary needs team to assist with the issue of repatriation. As all ASEAN leaders look favourably upon concluding the negotiations on the Code of Conduct as soon as possible, it is expected that the first reading of the Code of Conduct could be finalized within this year. Furthermore, the ASEAN outlook on the Indo-Pacific, which has been developed for more than a year, has finally been agreed upon.

# PRESENTATION FROM THE PANELIST



**Ms. Yuyun Wahyuningrum**  
(Representative of Indonesia to the  
ASEAN Intergovernmental  
Commission on Human Rights)



As Indonesia's representative to the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights (AICHR), Ms. Wahyuningrum provided an introduction to AICHR, and explained its targets and achievements since its establishment on October 23, 2009. In 10 years, AICHR has organized 122 activities, 33 reports, received 30 complaints about Human Rights, and has spent a total of 6 million US dollars. Contrary to popular belief, AICHR does not only deal with economic, social, and cultural rights, but also addresses civil and political rights, development rights, and rights to peace, with their main target being minority groups, namely women, children, the youth, and people with disabilities. In fact, AICHR has organized various activities that address business and rights to water, rights to education, and rights to health.

AICHR still has a lot of limitations, leading to criticisms from civil society. AICHR does not have a mandate to do fact-finding, monitoring, or investigating. It also has a lack of independency of the Representative. However, AICHR has a lot of possibilities too. AICHR can reach out to victims and hear their stories. It has the power to persuade through a platform of dialogue, learning and sharing with the ASEAN member states. AICHR can aid in establishing a referral system for these victims, and establish a focal point on specific issues within the ASEAN community.

Keeping these possibilities and limitations in mind, Indonesia's focus for the next decade of AICHR is protection. In order to do so, Indonesia has plans to create a mechanism to receive human rights complaints online, allowing them to document and bring cases at the attention to AICHR. Because AICHR cannot respond to the complaints, and can only receive and refer them, AICHR plans on coming up with policy briefs to translate and interpret the articles of the ASEAN Human Rights Declaration. AICHR will create working group consisting of women and children to

assist the ASEAN Commission of Women and Children (ACWC) mainstream the gender perspective. AICHR hopes to organize a mini Universal Periodic Review (UPR) and host a question and answer session regarding the situation of human rights amongst the 10 ASEAN countries. And suggested by the minister of human rights in Indonesia, AICHR will work on developing grievance mechanisms for those who have been rid of their basic rights. With these steps, AICHR hopes to improve the protection of discriminated persons within the ASEAN.

Looking at 'protection' in a more comprehensive and cohesive way, it consists of responses and actions, remedial action, and environmental building. These three concepts are components of the 'Protection Egg'. Ms. Wahyuningrum believes that this can aid Indonesia in developing the 'protection' that it has deemed to be its focus. The first layer of the Protection Egg is responses and actions. This refers to immediate response to any reports or abuses. The second layer is remedial. This consists of activities targeting the restoration of people's dignities such as rehabilitation, reinstatement, constitution and repatriation. The third layer is environmental building. Because protection needs the cooperation of the society in order to ensure adequate living conditions for the victims, this layer focuses on consolidating an environment for human rights victims.

# PRESENTATION FROM THE PANELIST



**Mr. Kornelius Purba**  
(Senior Managing Editor of  
The Jakarta Post)



Mr. Purba addressed 5 key points in his presentation. First, Mr. Purba claimed that there are controversies surrounding the Prime Minister of Thailand. He does not believe that the Junta can be held accountable for hosting the Summit, as Thailand has been controlled by the military for 5 years. The 34th ASEAN Summit itself was delayed due to Thailand's promised election that occurred during February.

Second, Mr. Purba clarified the idea of the ASEAN biannual summit. Every year, the ASEAN will have 2 summits. In past years, the first ASEAN Summit has always been held on the month of April. The April Summit is used by the ASEAN member states to discuss internal problems. In November, another ASEAN Summit will be held in which ASEAN dialogue partners like China, Japan, South Korea, Australia, and New Zealand will participate along with member states in the discussion of external issues.

Third, Mr. Purba went on to talk about the Bangkok Summit itself. It was revealed to the public that ASEAN had completed its outlook on the Indo-Pacific concept. In Mr. Purba's opinion, the concept is still very abstract. At the very least, ASEAN was able to unite on a single concept between 10 member states. Likewise, Mr. Purba mentions that while the ASEAN claims that the negotiations on the RCEP are coming to a close, the RCEP is basically the TPP with the addition of China. There are many internal problems between the negotiating countries – namely China and India – hence while the idea of the RCEP is ideal, there are still concerns being raised

about its completion and implementation. Next, the problem of the Rohingya crisis. The issue is that there are 5 ASEAN member states that are predominantly Buddhist. The people of Rohingya lack access to education, and while countries may want to provide aid, they might not have the sufficient resources to sustain the lives of hundreds and thousands of poor, uneducated refugees. ASEAN has also continuously struggled with the issue of the South China Sea. This is another complicated issue; while Indonesia is not a claimant, Indonesia also does not want to become an accidental hero. Because of that, the issue cannot be resolved, it is a problem between the ASEAN and China. Last, the problem of marine debris. Despite efforts to control the usage of plastic, Mr. Purba mentions that there will always be countries evading the law, contributing to the expansion of the issue.

Fourth, Mr. Purba discussed the idea of ASEAN centrality. He claims that ASEAN's problem is that it makes consensus-based decisions. Every single member state must agree with a decision before it is made, as there are equal rights and equal obligations for every country. However, the problem is that ASEAN member states' financial contributions are required to be equal, even though there are countries who are capable and willing to pay more. This makes ASEAN heavily dependant on donor countries like Japan. There is the idea of ASEAN centrality, but ASEAN is never the centre of attention due to outside domination. However, despite its limitations, ASEAN has helped a lot of its member states, Indonesia included. ASEAN members have the rights to bring up their own issues and seek for help in dealing with them. Mr. Purba then concludes by reminding the audience that consensus is not always bad. In fact, ASEAN's flexibility is one of its strengths.



# QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

## Session I

**Question:** In relation with the so called 'ASEAN Way', sometimes if we have a problem we just put it under the cover, is there really such kind of acceptance about the Indonesian proposal on the Indo Pacific, or is it just lip service in the ASEAN? Because I tend to agree with some observations, not only the journalist's observation made by Pak Kornelius, but with the Indo Pacific, there are several concerns. How do you foresee the resulting idea of the Indo Pacific not only in the sphere of the economy, but also security?

**Question:** Since we have talked a little bit about the Rohingya crisis, I understand that there is a talk about repatriating the Rohingya to Rakhine state, and Indonesia's position is quite positive, but qualified in a sense that the repatriation is possible as long as we can ensure a conducive environment and a guarantee of security. I wonder if there is any talk in the ASEAN on the way forward that we can ensure security for all the Rohingya in the Rakhine state. What is the way forward, and how will it take form, if there is an independent third party for example?

**Question:** Still about the Rohingya crisis, repatriation is one of the possible solutions, but in the possibility that it does not concede, we of course have to entertain that this will continue to be a protracted refugee crisis. So, with no hopes of repatriation or moving to a third country, there is a big possibility of a lot of refugees staying in Bangladesh and other neighbouring countries. So, what are the ways forward for ASEAN to ensure the safety as well as the dignity and likelihood of the refugees living in the region?

**Question:** We know that the South China Sea issue is based on a consensus in the ASEAN. That's why it cannot reach a conclusion right now. Can you share detailed information about the arguing point of the South China Sea? Why can't the ASEAN reach a consensus?

## Responses

**H. E. Amb. Michael Tene:** About the Indo-Pacific outlook, the outcome of the Summit is not an Indonesian Indo-Pacific outlook. It is an ASEAN outlook on the Indo-Pacific. We have been deliberating about this issue for more than a year. And so, the final outcome is a document that has already accommodated the various inputs, concerns, and interests from the ASEAN countries, hence it is an ASEAN outlook. Why do we need to have this kind of outlook? If you read the paper on the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific, the first part explains the rationale. It is well known that both the Pacific and Indian Ocean region are two of the most dynamic regions in the world. Most of the big economies are situated in that region. The Americas, China, Japan, South Korea, India, it's a very dynamic region. We view these two regions as an integrated region. From a geographical point of view, it is very clear that ASEAN is in the centre. Whether you like it or not, whatever happens in the Pacific, whatever happens in the Indian Ocean, or whatever interactions that affect both regions will affect the ASEAN, because we are stuck in the middle. So we have two options: whether we will merely react to what happens, or we can try to have our own voice in how the region is being developed and how we should set the norms, values, and rules of behaviours in a way of how countries in the region should interact to ensure that the region remains peaceful and prosperous as a centre of growth. It can create prosperity, alleviate poverty, but it also creates challenges. When countries become more prosperous, there is a need to modernize and further strengthen their military. If there is no transparency, then anxiety

will arise. The steps that we take can be viewed differently by others if we do not communicate properly. This outlook provides a framework for ASEAN to engage with countries in the Indo-Pacific primarily to ensure the interests of ASEAN. But, the interests of ASEAN intersect with many other countries in the Indo-Pacific, and we want to explore opportunities from these common interests. Basically, we are projecting the norms, values, and working methods that we have already developed in the ASEAN. The only regional mechanism that exists in the Pacific and Indian ocean that engages all stakeholders is the ASEAN. So, this is the reason why there is a need for ASEAN to develop an ASEAN outlook on the Indo Pacific.

Next, the Rohingya repatriation. Of course, the repatriation first and foremost will need to ensure safety. If there is no security, it will be impossible to carry out the repatriation process. In engaging with the Rohingya issues, the Rakhine province, Indonesia utilized both its own bilateral relations with the Myanmar government as well as through ASEAN. And now, the main action that is being carried out by the ASEAN is to assist the Myanmar government in the preparation for the repatriation. That's why we have sent the preliminary needs assessment team, and they have gone to the border of Rakhine state to identify the areas in which the ASEAN can help in carrying out the repatriation process.

South China Sea. Yes, the leaders discussed this and there is a sense of urgency surrounding this topic. The ASEAN and China already have the Code of Conduct in the South China Sea that was agreed upon back in 2002, and we have been implementing the declaration with China for more than 10 years now. In the declaration, there is a provision about having a Code of Conduct – not simply a declaration, but a more binding document on the Code of Conduct in the South China Sea. ASEAN has been pushing for this negotiation since the declaration, so to say that ASEAN has been wavering about this negotiation is not factually true. ASEAN has been pushing for negotiations on the Code of Conduct since we have agreed on the declaration more than a decade ago. Now we are in a good situation because both China and the ASEAN have expressed wishes to finish the negotiation process within 3 years. For ASEAN, we would like to finalize these negotiations as soon as possible. Currently, we are ready for the 1st reading of the draft of the Code of Conduct. What I can say is that the draft follows closely the structure of the Declaration of the Code of Conduct on the South China Sea. Hopefully, we can conclude the first reading by this year. It is very important both for China and the ASEAN and for other stakeholders in the region that we have this Code of Conduct. It will help build confidence between countries as well as claimant states in the South China Sea. One thing I have to emphasize is that the Code of Conduct is not a negotiation about territorial disputes. It is a code of conduct about how to manage potential rising conflicts. It is a code of conduct that focuses on building confidence through collaboration between ASEAN and China.

**Ms. Yuyun Wahyuningrum:** On Rohingya, in the last couple of days, we have heard and read some development in relation to the issue of the Rohingya refugees. There have been some news regarding Myanmar's plans to explain what the Rohingyas will expect to obtain when they return, so there has been an assumption that the refugees will return. But I think we need to address the reason why people leave their home countries, because there is a lack of security. So I agree with the minister that there is a need to have a guarantee of security. Even without persuasion, if they are convinced that they have a guarantee of security, they will go back home. And that doesn't exist right now, which is why many Rohingyas are reluctant to go home. Many refugees were angry because they felt left out and unheard by the ASEAN and their government. So, this is another issue that ASEAN have to work together to solve.

And I think it has been pretty obvious that many Rohingyas requested to be accepted as citizens, because having citizenship means that they can access almost all of the basic needs such as education and healthcare. I found a number of problems there in terms of the acceptance, however, especially with the process of registration. I think that the report has not addressed how the movement of people will be done in a safe way. In relation to those who are staying in refugee centres, there are a lot of problems too. Idleness is a problem. If refugees do not have a right to work, then there is a fear that there will be more criminal acts committed by the refugees. It seems like no one knows what should be done first. At the moment, ASEAN and the Myanmar have agreed upon repatriation as the first step. I found that two recommendations can be workable, for instance, Myanmar government can invite ASEAN member states to observe the process. Second, Myanmar government can invite entities, groups, or centres to provide or contribute technical assistance or others in the process of repatriation.

**Mr. Kornelius Purba:** Rohingya, again, is a very complicated issue. The problem is that ASEAN countries still have their own domestic issues. ASEAN should involve more predominantly Buddhist nations, and build more trust amongst themselves. Indonesia has contributed a lot to the issue, however there is a tendency for Indonesia to become a major player. However, Indonesia's domestic security issues should be more important.

And about Indo Pacific again, it is an idea that is very hard to sell. And South China Sea, all ASEAN members are very dependent on their economic relationship with China. ASEAN can talk about a Code of Conduct, however as long as China's economy is still powerful, China will still prefer to talk about bilateral issues.

Why doesn't Indonesia, a non-permanent member of the Security Council, propose a resolution on Rohingya? Not just because we are a Muslim country, but because it is a crime against humanity. Of course, it's very complicated to issue a resolution, but Indonesia should at least try rather than talk about UN Security Council reforms. That is my suggestion.

**H. E. Amb. Michael Tene:** I'm just trying to convey the point that the conflict in Rakhine state, of course there is the religious factor, but essentially this is not a conflict about religion. There are many Muslims in other parts of Myanmar, and as far as I know there is no persecution against Muslim minorities. So, while religion plays an important role, it is not the only factor and I believe that it is not the root factor of the crisis in Rakhine state.

## Session 2

**Question:** You said that the focus of AICHR in the next 10 years is protection. I'm wondering about the sensitive issue, the elephant in the room, which is about LGBT issues in Indonesia and also in other ASEAN member states.

**Question:** You mentioned that the COC negotiations are not about territorial dispute but a Code of Conduct to build confidence. By building confidence does that mean that we have agreed that the COC would not be a binding document? Also, I want to know your views and what about the reports of the missile tests that have been happening in the South China Sea, and what the ASEAN's views are on that.

**Question:** On ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific, we all know that the negotiation took a very short time, less than 2 years since its introduction. I can't help but wonder if there was any compromise made during the negotiation. Is the outlook less about the content than of the release itself? What was really going on in the negotiations for the ASEAN outlook in the Indo-Pacific concept?

**Question:** You said that AICHR doesn't have a mandate to affect findings, but instead you have a possibility to hear the victim's stories. Can you explain how that differs, and how it can help the victims?

## Responses

**Ms. Yuyun Wahyuningrum:** Protection is something that is lacking now. Not only for the LGBT, but for all victims of human rights in the ASEAN. So, having protection mandates will assume that everyone will be included. We typically prioritize those who are marginalized and vulnerable, and the LGBT are under this category. So, taking protection as the priority does not preclude the marginalized group, but I understand the point that many marginalized groups like the LGBT still faces human rights abuses in the region. In ACIHR, talking about the LGBT is still challenging, because Indonesia and many other countries still have concerns regarding the issue. So, one way to do it is not approaching the issue by the term 'LGBT', but perhaps bringing it up as an umbrella issue such as non-discrimination or minorities. That's how we are trying to approach the issues. We're trying to prevent ourselves from discriminating against minority groups in the region. Whether we have succeeded, not yet. It is a process of working together amongst 10 countries and engaging at a level of comfort for each member state.

What is the difference between hearing the victims and fact-finding? Fact-finding is the activity in which the representative of AICHR finds information required for the issue. Hearing the victim can be done in different ways. For instance, we can have a workshop. We can have sessions in which victims can share their stories. Hearing victim's stories can be a sensitive topic, therefore we need to obtain their consent to share their stories. But providing them a secure space and confidence is important. So they are two different efforts, and there are a number of ways to hear the stories of victims. Hearing the stories of victims is not new in this region. Perhaps we can start with small steps such as creating workshops. We can have sessions in which victims or children of the victims can be heard. Those are possibilities that can happen through AICHR.

**H. E. Amb. Michael Tene:** First, about the Indo-Pacific. As far as I know, the bargaining happens during the discussion on the text itself. The countries propose different ideas, and we try to accommodate all of their views into one outlook.

Let me use this opportunity again to highlight what the outlook means. The outlook is a framework on how the ASEAN engages with the external partners in the Indian and Pacific Ocean region. If you look at the text, it contains our vision of the agreement. We talk about the Indian ocean and Pacific Ocean as a comprehensive, integrated region. We talk about Indo-Pacific as a region of cooperation instead of rivalry. We talk about Indo-Pacific as a region of development and prosperity for all, and we talk about the importance of maritime domain. And in the outlook, there are principles by which ASEAN engages itself with partners in the region. And then, comes to the area of cooperation. This area of cooperation is meant to further strengthen the relationship amongst countries in the region while at the same time to achieve a certain objective.

So, how will we bring this forward? Basically, in my view, there are two components. One, we want to export our norms and values as contained in the principles of the Indo-Pacific outlook. We want the relationship amongst countries in the Indo-Pacific to be carried out based on certain norms, which are the principles that we have put into the outlook. These are universal, and can really help countries in the region manage their relationships. This is not simply an idealistic view, because we already tried and implemented the inputs of the ASEAN countries, and we have been quite successful. And, of course, the second part is how we can encourage the participation of our partners in the implementation of the various areas of cooperation that we have put forward in the outlook. It addresses the various challenges (developmental, economic, political, security) that are faced by both ASEAN and the stakeholders in the region. So this is how we can move forward.

The second one is about the South China Sea Code of Conduct. The nature of the Code of Conduct is something that is still being negotiated. There is a view that this should be legally binding, and there are other views that says there is no need for it to be legally binding like a treaty that will require various domestic adjustments. What is more important is how the Code of Conduct can be implemented. Like I said before, the draft of the Code of Conduct's structure is based on the Declaration of the Code of Conduct on the South China Sea. So, there is a part discussing the base principles that we have agreed upon. It contains the relevant reference to the international conventions as well as regional arrangements. And then we have a section on how we can promote confidence amongst the ASEAN and China. The purpose of the Code of Conduct is to build confidence through collaborative cooperation and the implementation of various projects. And then we have a section on how we can deal with possible problems, and how we can manage rising conflicts. Those are the elements in the Code of Conduct. There are other parts as well, but like I said before, it follows the structure of the Declaration of Code of Conduct.

**Mr. Kornelius Purba:** From a media perspective, Indo-Pacific's idea actually comes from Pak Jokowi. At the beginning of his presidency, he had maritime visions of a sea-toll road before expanding it to a global maritime fulcrum. Understanding his vision and mission, when translated into action it becomes the Indo-Pacific vision. The process was very hurried. It is not well-prepared academically. So, Jokowi himself was a bit confused on how to sell his ideas. Of course, it's still very hard to sell the idea, but at least ASEAN has united.

## Session 3

**Question:** What can you expect after the ASEAN Summit this year and ahead of the next Summit in November?

**Question:** I would like to ask in regard to the Rohingya crisis and in regards to the principles, mandates, and functions of AICHR. I would like to mention the non-interference principle that's being hold by the AICHR. And aside from talking about how it hampers the endeavours to actually talk about the conflict in Myanmar, I would like to ask in your opinion on how we could "develop strategies for the promotion of human rights". Because that's the official mandate and function of the commission, and how can you actually help? What are the steps that we can take right now?

## Responses

**Mr. Kornelius Purba:** For the next Summit, human rights problems should not be seen only from human rights per say. Each member has its own problems. Laos, Vietnam, Cambodia, Myanmar, even Singapore and Malaysia still have their own problems. Again, from a media perspective, the Summit will work. The prime minister of Thailand has his own burden to prove that he really is a democrat.

**Ms. Yuyun Wahyuningrum:** What is the mandate of AICHR on Rohingya? Right now, none. At least, from the leaders, AICHR has no where in the TOR addressing the preliminary needs assessments, and AICHR was also not consulted in relation to this issue. Therefore, AICHR has been trying to bring itself into the picture. Now, there is a certain level of openness that Myanmar has been expressing to hear some of the updates regarding Rakhine, while previously it was never brought up. At the AICHR level, we try to engage with all member countries in this issue, because with this level of openness, even though it is small and perhaps artificial, we can continue to engage with the countries and offer technical assistance and expertise in relation to human rights. We believe that this issue of refugees and repatriation need to have a human rights dimension to it.

In relation to non-interference principles, in the last meeting, we hardly invoked any words in relation to it. So, we discussed a lot of things in the region, but no country so far used non-interference principles as one of the issues that block us from talking. I don't know what the future will look like, but so far, we don't see non-interference as a problem right now.

Is there any strategy to promote human rights? In the past few years, AICHR has developed several strategies like working with sectoral buddies and working with organizations to mainstream human rights. AICHR has also organized many activities to organize a platform in which all member states can work together and influence each other in relation to human rights. AICHR has been working in different levels: sectoral buddies, dealing with ASEAN member states, and dealing with civil society. Sometimes, it works quite well, and sometimes it doesn't. However, it has been very difficult to bring up the matter of civil society. The current situation on digital age has taken AICHR's attention. For instance, there are two or three activities that look at this content. Our freedom has changed because of this digital age. So, a number of activities in AICHR are looking at the current situation in the digital age.

**H. E. Amb. Michael Tene:** Like Pak Kornelius mentioned, the ASEAN has two summits every year. The first is an internal one, and the second is a summit with the dialogue partners. I don't know what the agenda will be, but from past experiences, I believe that it will be more focused on ASEAN relations with its dialogue partners and global issues that can affect all of us, including the global economic situation and the RCEP that is supposed to be concluded by the end of this year. Talking about the RCEP, the RCEP was first proposed during Indonesia's chairmanship in 2011, and it was launched in 2012. The idea of the RCEP is that regional economic partnership between dialogue partners that already has free trade arrangement with ASEAN. That is why the membership of the RCEP is as it is. On the issue of Rohingya, just a concluding remark, it is without a doubt that every country, including Indonesia, may have its own interests. But when it comes to ASEAN, even if it is very difficult, we want to improve the situation on the ground. We don't want to make noises. We want to make a contribution to improvement on the ground. It is a very complicated issue, and creating noises that will not contribute to improvement on the ground will only make things worse. So, it is better to concentrate on matters that can affect the situation in a positive way.



## ABOUT ASEAN STUDIES PROGRAM

The ASEAN Studies Program was established on February 24, 2010, to become a center of excellence on ASEAN related issues, which can assist in the development of the ASEAN Community by 2015. The Habibie Center through its ASEAN Studies Program, alongside other institutions working towards the same goal, hopes to contribute to the realization of a more people-oriented ASEAN that puts a high value on democracy and human rights.

The objective of the ASEAN Studies Program is not merely only to conduct research and discussion within academic and government circles, but also to strengthen public awareness by forming a strong network of civil society in the region that will be able to help spread the ASEAN message. With the establishment of ASEAN Studies Program, The Habibie Center aims to play its part within our capabilities to the ASEAN regional development.

## ABOUT TALKING ASEAN

Talking ASEAN is a monthly public dialogue held at The Habibie Center in Jakarta. Covering a wide array of issues related to ASEAN, Talking ASEAN addresses topics of: Economic Integration, Socio-cultural, & Democracy, human rights and regional peace, among others. Featuring local and visiting experts, Talking ASEAN is one of a series of twelve dialogues regularly held each month and open to a target audience consisting of ASEAN officials, foreign ambassadors & diplomats, academics, university students, businesses, and the media.

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